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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY TOWARD BURMA

REF: TOKYO 02477

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reasons: 1.4 (b)(d).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: Using humanitarian aid and technical assistance to keep bilateral lines of communication open is the backbone of Japan's foreign policy strategy on Burma, MOFA contacts told Tokyo Embassy political officer on June [¶20.](#) Japan shares many of the United States' concerns on Burma, including Burma's late-May agreement to pursue civil nuclear cooperation with Russia. Tokyo is using a flexible approach, however, because keeping bilateral dialogue open is necessary to accomplish its shared goals, MOFA First Southeast Asia Division Principal Deputy Director Kuwabara explained. The Abe Administration will be "carefully watching" the Russia-Burma nuclear deal; the Japanese Embassy in Burma has emphasized to Burmese authorities the need for Burma to follow IAEA rules, Kuwabara noted on June 27. Foreign Minister Aso, however, did not raise this issue during his May 28 meeting with Foreign Minister Nyan Win. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (C) Foreign Minister Taro Aso pressed for the release of political detainee Aung San Suu Kyi, and conveyed Japan's deep concern about the one-year extension of her house arrest announced on May 27, during a meeting in Tokyo with Burmese Foreign Minister Nyan Win on May 28, according to MOFA contact Masuya Nishikuramori, who served as the official interpreter at the meeting. Aso called for Burma to implement a clear time frame for implementing democracy and urged Burma to move forward on implementing a new constitution. (Comment: At the time of the meeting, the date for reconvening the National Convention (NC) was undecided, but Burma later notified MOFA that the military regime will reconvene its NC on July 18. MOFA had not expected the NC to reconvene until early October, and was pleased with the July 18 date. End Comment).

[¶3.](#) (C) Foreign Minister Aso, contrary to Japanese press reporting, failed to raise Japan's concerns over Burma's late-May agreement with Russia on civil nuclear cooperation during the meeting. Although the one-hour plus meeting lasted longer than expected, Aso did not have time to broach the matter, MOFA First Southeast Asia Division Principal Deputy Director Kuwabara told Tokyo Embassy political officer on June 27. The Japanese Embassy in Burma, however, has urged the Burmese to follow IAEA rules on nuclear safety and security. Japan remains concerned since Burma has not approved the IAEA Safeguards Additional Protocol. Tokyo will continue to watch the situation closely from a "security, safety, and nonproliferation perspective" Kuwabara stated.

[¶4.](#) (C) Japan shares U.S. concerns on human rights issues in Burma, and hopes both Japan and the United States will encourage China to raise this with Burma, Kuwabara explained. It is time for China to press the Burmese on this, rather

than simply continuing its policy of calling the matter a "domestic political problem," Kuwabara noted. At the same time, it is important for the international community not to isolate Burma. Japan will continue to use humanitarian aid and technical assistance as tools to promote bilateral dialogue with the Burmese, Kuwabara emphasized. Kuwabara cited Japan's June 5th decision to provide roughly USD 80,650 (10 million yen) worth of disaster relief goods to Burma following the May tidal wave and cyclone disaster, as a way of using humanitarian aid to engage Burma.

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